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ABSTRACT

Celebrating the vitality and diversity of West Coast writing, this book is a collection of 35 essays by writers based in California, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska. Loosely organized around the ideas that West Coast writers often look to their roots elsewhere and that they pursue new directions as varied as their roots, the collection presents a panoply of West Coast viewpoints, offering fresh perspectives on poetry, architecture, and the natural world. The authors in the collection range from distinguished academics, such as Leo Braudy, Dolores Hayden, and Bill Berkson, to well-known writers, such as David Harris and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, to an actor (Peter Coyote), a poet (Sam Hamill) who laments that poetry is not an occupation, a chef who offers a recipe, a doctoral candidate, a photographer, and a rural land manager. The essays in the collection are particularly concerned with (1) educating the reader about the present cultural life of the West Coast--in its fullest intellectual sense, and in both its urban and rural aspects--and (2) exploring the cultural antecedents of the contributors--i.e., reminiscences of immigrant ancestors and how it felt to grow up in two cultures: Chinese-American, Lebanese-American, Armenian-American, and Hispanic-American, among others. (NKA)

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